

# CHURCH UNION

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COMMISSION ON FAITH AND ORDER

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## NEWS AND VIEWS

NOVEMBER 1959

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A Unified Ministry

# CHURCH UNION

## NEWS AND VIEWS

(New Series)

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North India and Pakistan

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# Church Union

## News and Views

(New Series)

### A Richer Heritage

SOMETIMES we worship in an unfamiliar church of a different denomination.

We then experience something of the vitality, the dignity or the beauty of that worship, but realise with a pang that we are really strangers there, guests received with courtesy, but not properly part of that worshipping group. We are stirred by an intense longing for the day when the man-made barriers will be down and we shall be able boldly to know that here we too are at home, that this too is our heritage.

There are also times in our own worship when we gladly welcome visitors from another tradition. We want them, as honoured guests, to feel at home and are glad that they should join in worship with us. But, with sorrow, we realise that, so long as our denominations are divided, they cannot be fully at home among us. On either side the welcome may be cordial; on both sides the experience teaches us how much richer the Christian heritage is than we can find in our own circle alone; but the dividing line remains. We have not entered into the heritage.

Yet it is the same Lord whom we worship, and we do so, not through any achievement of our own, but solely by His grace Who, without respect of persons, and with infinite generosity, has made us His own. This creates a relationship of which the only appropriate expression is that given in the words: "Ye are no longer strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (Eph. 2: 19). It is in that relationship that we understand that "All are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (I Cor 3: 22). Nothing less is our heritage.

Even in negotiations, in the process of planning a constitution for a united Church, those concerned have found a richer picture of their Christian heritage than they could have known in isolation. This richer picture is already suggested in many parts of the *Plan of Union* which have had scant attention from the critics.

1. The Constitution introduces the whole section on the Church's ministry with a statement (Chap. VII) on "the Priesthood of all Believers". Such a statement no doubt is based on the emphases of the Reformation, but it is rooted in Scripture: "*The Church is a 'royal priesthood' of believers*" and it contains the salutary reminder that "to the whole Church and to every member of it belong the duty and the privilege of spreading the good news of the Kingdom of God, and the message of salvation through Jesus Christ".

The theme is further developed in Chap. VIII on the ministry of the laity—the people of God. Here, in the drafting, there was a contribution from various traditions, beginning perhaps with the Methodist Churches with their experience of lay preachers and awareness of the range of the Church's task. This is reflected in such paragraphs as 2 (a) which points out that this ministry is exercised

"by the life and witness of members in their daily contact with the world, wherein lie the Church's evangelistic task and opportunity".

Here too is a reminder that this ministry "includes the worship of God both in private and in public" which was pointed out by an Anglican representative and heartily welcomed by all who remember that "man's Chief End is to glorify God". Here too is a clear recognition of what Reformed Churches have expressed

in the eldership, namely that "a share in the spiritual care, nurture and government of the Church" involves a spiritual vocation of certain laymen and women who are rightly set apart for their task by prayer in public worship. The whole chapter is worthy of the most careful study and indicates an understanding of what the ministry of the Church implies which is richer than that presently expressed in any one separate tradition.

2. Another example is found in the section on the local church (Chap. X.4) which owes much to the contribution of the Baptist negotiators. Each denomination has a place for the local church, but not all would unaided have expressed so clearly the awareness that

"in the purpose of God every local group of the faithful organised for Christian life and worship...expresses in that place the life of the same holy, catholic and apostolic Church".

More and more keenly are we realising that the place where our divisions most painfully assert themselves is in local divisions, be it in divided worship or be it in factions within a single congregation. The sheer evil of such division and quarrelsomeness is recognised in its intensity only when we realise afresh that the local church is in fact called to be what is defined above. It was P. T. Forsyth who said, "We do not found churches, but stations of the Church", and it is this profound awareness of what the local church is which is expressed in the *Plan of Union*.

3. Lastly, there is the example of the diaconate. Two of the negotiating bodies, the Anglican and the Methodist Episcopal, bring with them a ministry in three orders and the *Plan* states that

"the ordained ministry of the Church of North India/Pakistan shall consist of bishops, presbyters and deacons".

At the same time, none has felt satisfied that the existing practice in the churches mentioned expresses an interpretation of the ministry of the "deacon" (normally apparently just a person who is likely soon to be ordained presbyter) which adequately represents either the experience of the early Church or the best form for such a distinctive ministry in the Church today. At the same time the Baptist churches have their own practice of a ministry of lay deacons which, in a different way, expresses certain important aspects of the diaconate. With careful consideration of this diverse experience and in the hope that a united Church may discover a fuller significance in this ministry, the section on Deacons has been drafted (Chap IX. 15—19).

These paragraphs contain an explicit statement of the distinctive functions of the deacon (15 : a, b, c) but are not intended to provide ready-made a pattern for this ministry. Rather they open a door which the Church may use to develop such a pattern for the enrichment of the whole Church's ministry whereby

"it is hoped that it will be possible so to use this office as to set other ministers free for the functions which more properly belong to their distinctive calling".

It has never been claimed that the *Plan of Union* has a complete solution for many of the questions involved. Yet even the opening of a way for new experience has been made possible only through the corporate thinking of those of many traditions who have worked together to frame the *Plan*. The full realisation of what it means can come only when, by act of union, it become possible for the divided groups to enter together on their richer heritage.



# Securing a Unified Ministry for a United Church

(A note with special reference to the N. I./P. Plan)

THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON T. D. SULLY

## 1. Some Principles involved

IT is generally agreed that in ordination it is God (in Christ) who ordains, in and through His Church. Hence in any rite in which something more than a mere human authorisation to office is sought, authority and grace are similarly sought from God and not merely from His Church. Prayer with the laying on of hands has thus been adopted in the Plan in the rite of unification of the ministry. (Cf. Plan, p. 56 para 14; and Lambeth, p. 2. 32, last para.)

God works in and through His Church, where ministry, authority and *episcopate* are recognised, organised and continued. Hence the outward sign involves the authority recognised in the Church—for the Anglican the laying on of episcopal hands.

What God has already done and blessed is to be fully and mutually recognised, with no suggestion of a repetition. There is to be no denial of an ordination already received, nor a repetition of it. (Cf. Lambeth, p. 2. 36 at the bottom.) Yet differences in ministerial tradition are to be frankly recognised, since no ministry can claim to have been unaffected by our divisions. Divisions in the Church have involved the 'catholicity' of the ministry, with restrictions both in the ministry of the Word, and, particularly, in that of the Sacraments.

We cannot think of union plans having to wait for full agreement on every point of theology and ecclesiology involved; and it is our disunion which is largely responsible for divergences in belief and interpretation, for lack of understanding and one-sided emphases. Hence it may be legitimate to accept the 'historic episcopate' without any particular interpretation, or alternative forms of baptism without any initial resolution of the tensions involved, because it seems to be the way towards fuller understanding and agreement. It should not be taken to imply either that interpretations are not necessary, or that differences can just be ignored. It may well be that where we are dealing with the mys-

teries of our faith a full comprehension must involve all the saints within the fellowship of the one Spirit.

The Plan has thus aimed at comprehension, with allowance for difference of interpretation. While a particular interpretation is not to be forced upon the whole united Church at the outset, equally the Plan has sought to avoid anything which would *exclude* an interpretation legitimately held in any of the uniting churches.

## 2. Ordination and Orders

Our differing traditions involve differing interpretations of these words, with a serious possibility of misunderstanding.

(a) The episcopal churches retain the threefold ministry of bishop, presbyter (priest) and deacon; though in what sense they are three 'orders' is not fully agreed. It may be sufficient to recognise (as the Plan does) that each form of ministry has God's special calling, and thus a 'character' of its own. Sacramental ordination belongs to the bishop; the celebration of the Eucharist to bishop and presbyter; the ministry of Word and of service belongs to all three.

Within this context of tradition and thought, 'ordination' is used of the call and authorisation to either grade of the ministry, and thus the same individual may be 'ordained' more than once without any suggestion of repetition or suspicion of 're-ordination'.

It may be recalled here that at Lambeth 1948, in the appendix on 'Supplemental Ordination', further theological issues were raised, and there seems still to be a need for greater theological clarity at this point than has yet been achieved.

(b) In the non-episcopal churches there is ordinarily but one 'order' recognised—that of presbyter, though there may be lay elders or deacons. Ordination is to that one ministry. In practice, if not in clear theory, the minister is ordained to a ministry of the

whole Church and by a group of ministers representing the whole Church.

In this context there is but one 'ordination' which is unrepeatable; and any further 'ordination' must appear to be a 're-ordination'. Yet the minister in this case cannot just be identified with the second 'order' in (a). The presbyterian 'presbyter' is more than the episcopalian 'presbyter' in virtue of exercising his part in a corporate *episcopate*, while he may be held by some to lack somewhat in comparison with the episcopalian 'priest'. A superintendent or 'moderator' is not ordained to his office, and there is no corporation of moderators to correspond with an episcopal Synod. Thus simply to rank together all who were called presbyters or priests in the uniting churches in a second 'order' of ministry would be to overlook a significant difference in the traditions. Similarly the elements of *episcopate* exercised by presbyterian ministers in presbytery, should not be overlooked in securing a united *episcopate* for the united Church.

These differences in traditional usage seem to call for caution in the use of the term 'ordination' in connection with the rites with which we are here concerned.

### 3. Initial Unification

God gives the unity we seek to the several uniting churches in response to their seeking and prayer, and on the basis of the measure of agreement reached. That gift of unity is recognised in the Inaugural Service in all schemes with humble thanksgiving. But this may not by itself secure the fully unified ministry of the united Church. At this point we need to recognise the differences of method.

(a) At the inauguration of the CSI that Church received both its membership and its ministry. Anglican bishops ceased to be Anglican and became bishops of the CSI, and presbyters of all the uniting Churches became presbyters of the CSI. There was not any separate rite of unification and, for some at least, differences remain with consequent scruples unremoved, and the necessity of the Pledge.

(b) In the case of the Ceylon Scheme and the NI/P Plan there is a corresponding first Step, inaugurating the united Church, but this forms part of a larger rite of inauguration

and does not by itself secure the united ministry of the Church.

In the Ceylon Scheme what in the north we have called Step 1 has been distinguished as 'The Service of Union' and on p. 76 the significance of this is clearly stated—"that these Churches...are become one Church of Lanka, and that all the ministers and members of the several uniting Churches are now knit together in one communion and fellowship". But this is immediately followed by the further rites by which bishops "are now possessed of the fullness of the ministry of this Church in which are joined together our diverse ministries", and in which ministers of the uniting churches are received "into the Presbyterate of the Church of Lanka". (Scheme 21-22) This is, if anything, made even more explicit in the NI/P Plan where on p. 59, paras 21 and 22, the bishops and other ministers are spoken of as "having entered the ministry of the Church of North India/Pakistan by the Representative Act of Unification of the Ministry".

In these cases, therefore, it would be true to say that as a result of Step 1 there are already bishops and presbyters brought within the membership and fellowship of the united Church along with the laity; but while they are thus bishops or presbyters "in the united Church, they are not at this stage bishops or presbyters "of" the united Church.

In the case of membership we are content to accept God's gift of unity without further question, though there are some, of course, who would draw a distinction between members episcopally confirmed and those not. But in the case of the ministry, the inaugural rite is to be supplemented by rites of unification, and that partly at least to meet Anglican scruples. Lambeth 1948 recognised that such a method would seem more likely to prove acceptable if adopted in future schemes of union.

### 4. Ceylon and North India/Pakistan

The Scheme and the Plan agree in the need for an initial rite of unification; but differ in the method. Historically this is mainly due to two factors:—

(a) the inclusion in the NI/P Plan of the strong Methodist Church in Southern Asia with an *episcopate* of its own, with the consequent need of bringing together the two

divergent episcopal traditions and two sets of bishops ;

(b) the influence in the NI negotiations of the strong presbyterian element (Scottish, Irish and American) in the United Church of Northern India, with a strong theological leadership.

The Ceylon Scheme, with its comparative simplicity and the prominence given throughout to the bishops, naturally appeals to Anglicans ; while the Plan by comparison is rendered far more complex and difficult to follow. It has to be recognised, however, that the Ceylon method is unlikely to prove acceptable in any region where Presbyterianism is strong, and, if it is the only form of unification which can satisfy Anglican difficulties and scruples, the whole question may need to be further examined.

The difficulties pointed out by the Lambeth Committee are largely due to the insertion of Step 2 before the central rite of Unification, and in this note we may consider that this complication may be removed, either by there being no second episcopate to bring in, or by some other method being possible outside the main Inaugural Service.

(i) The Ceylon Scheme secures the episcopate of the united Church *first*, taking the existing Anglican bishops in Ceylon and securing the consecration of any additional bishops needed. These bishops are then commissioned as bishops of the Church of Lanka by the laying on of hands by representatives of the uniting churches.

Each bishop of the united Church then carries out the unification of the presbyters in his diocese, by the laying on of his hands with prayer.

(ii) In the NI/P Plan the procedure is different.

(a) The ministry of each uniting Church (by representation) which is to be brought into the ministry of the united Church, is presented before God *as a whole*, whether consisting of bishops and presbyters, or of presbyters who have shared in the exercise of *episcopate* (see para 12 on p. 56), so that each and every minister may receive from God the continuance of what he has already received, together with the additional authority and grace which may in God's sight be needed for his ministry in the united Church. It is made clear that in the case of existing bishops that ministry is to be the ministry of a bishop

in the united Church, and in the case of existing presbyters that of a presbyter. Thus the united Church receives from God its bishops and representative presbyters together, without any suggestion of discrimination, yet without confusion or any ignoring of the difference existing and continuing between bishop and presbyter. Equally there is no discrimination, nor any ignoring of the difference between presbyters who have and those who have not shared in a corporate exercise of episcopate, nor between those who have and those who have not previously received episcopal ordination (see para 15 on p. 56).

(b) In the actual procedure, whether in the central Act or in the Diocesan Acts which follow, presbyters are associated with bishops in the laying on of hands.

(c) In Step 3 of the NI/P Plan *the nucleus of the united ministry is first secured*, consisting of one bishop and two or three presbyters. They are brought into the united ministry by God in answer to prayer and through the laying on of hands of one representative of each of the uniting churches. In this Act it is open to us to think of God using and continuing in and through this nucleus the several traditions of the uniting churches. Anglicans will note that the representative of the CIPBC would certainly be one of its bishops through whose sharing in this ministry they can be confident that the tradition of historic episcopacy is to be ensured and continued in the united Church.

This 'nucleus ministry', a bishop and presbyters of the united Church, then conduct the rest of the rite of unification for the ministers from each of the uniting churches ; and the continuance in the diocesan rites (Step 5) proceeds on the same lines.

In this procedure each minister, whether bishop or presbyter, will receive the laying on of hands of a bishop and associated presbyters. Thus a former bishop of the CIPBC may receive the laying on of hands of one who had been a fellow-bishop in his Church, but the latter is now acting not as a bishop of the CIPBC but as a bishop of the united Church. Similarly a presbyter of the UCNI may be receiving the laying on of hands of one who was a fellow-presbyter in the UCNI. But he will be acting now as a presbyter of the new united Church in this unique ministry of reconciliation.

While the fundamental principle of the Act is the humble willingness to receive from God whatever of grace and authority He wills to give in each case, it is open to an Anglican, in accordance with his own conscientious convictions, to believe that God will be supplying through the ministry of the bishop the tradition of episcopal ordination for those who have not previously received it. He may even from his own point of view speak of it as an 'ordination' to the new form of ministry, of one who had already received ordination from God. The non-Anglican, as we have already seen, will not be able to regard the rite as an ordination in the sense in which he uses the term, and will easily misunderstand his brother Anglican's usage. It may thus be wiser to follow the advice of Ceylon and to avoid giving old names to what is a new and unique rite without any adequate name.

The procedure is wholly mutual in all this, for whatever special tradition in its ministry is treasured in either of the uniting churches, members of that church may believe that God will continue that treasured tradition as something to be wholly shared by all who are receiving the laying on of hands, and the laying on of the hands of the representative of that tradition may be for him the outward and visible sign of this gracious act of God.

### 5. Present difficulties

The Lambeth criticisms and requirements mainly result from the complications introduced by the presence of Step 2, and it seemed to the bishops that the simplest way of avoiding the apparent repetitions and obscurities which they found would be to complete Step 2 as the unification of the episcopate of the united Church, leaving Step 3 as the

subsequent unification of the presbyters. The Episcopal Synod of the CIPBC sought to work out this suggestion in a way which would not wholly alter the feature that in the unification rite each Church is presenting its whole ministry.

Yet it must be admitted that the change in either form is a complete change in the character of the central Act of Unification as worked out in the Plan, and a change which brings it into closer line with the procedure adopted in Ceylon. It is not to be wondered at that the change at once provoked opposition in the UCNI, making it almost certain that it would not be acceptable to that Church. And it should be noted that a considerable section of that Church has already voted in favour of the Plan as it is in the 3rd Edition.

At the same time the Methodist Church in Southern Asia has taken occasion of the apparent reopening of negotiations to press for further changes, including a reopening of the carefully agreed basis for bringing together the two episcopal traditions; and it is even suggested that this Church may be found unwilling to accept the Plan at all. Should this be the case, of course, Step 2 would be no longer needed, and the procedure much simplified; but we must still strive to meet the difficulties of our Methodist brethren; and there may be other ways of removing the present obstacles involved in Step 2.

Should that be possible, there may still be a possibility that the method adopted in Step 3, the central Act of Unification, may yet prove theologically acceptable, even to Anglicans. All this needs very careful study, with mutual consideration, and with a constant seeking for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

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"Indian Methodism still stands where its great founder stood who said, concerning his relation to other Christian organizations and workers, 'I desire to form a league, offensive and defensive, with every soldier of Jesus Christ; if thy heart be as my heart give me thy hand.'... For this ideal of co-operation and unity let us strive unceasingly. Methodism was born not to formulate a new faith or to establish a new type of ecclesiastical organization, but to call men to a new life, and we are never truer to our origin than when joining hands with all other Christians and Christian organizations engaged in similar work. Let it be made known to all other Christian bodies working in India that our purpose is to strive honestly and earnestly for co-operation, federation and union whenever and wherever it will best advance the cause of Christ in the Indian Empire."

(From the Episcopal Address of Bishops Warne, Oldham, and Robinson delivered at the Central Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1912, as found in the Central Conference Minutes for 1912, page 478.)

# Inter-Communion as the Road to Church Union\*

REV. TH. B. W. G. GRAMBERG

**W**E are trying in these articles to make a contribution to the cause of church union in this country. A discovery we made last time is that a union which is not prepared locally and becomes on that local level visible and relevant is immaterial. Now we shall have to carry on our argument. I spoke of the necessity of churches working together in the Youth and Christian Home Weeks as organised by the National Christian Council, in Christian action and service. The question I want to raise now is: Is that a sufficient preparation for church union? **It is not.** It is a small beginning and if that little bit of Christian co-operation is not yet there, the whole situation is essentially unchristian. But let us not think that working together for Christian causes is the same as union. For after the small united effort is happily performed, every church is allowed to return to its own fort and does not have to care any more about the others.

Here a basic remark about the nature of a church is required. When we are speaking of churches we are not speaking of worldly organisations, but of the people of God. Now when by disobedience or sinful pride the unity of God's people and its Master has been broken, how has that unity to be renewed? We all know the way of the Eucharist. By the Lord's Supper, the visible presentation of the atonement given by Christ, unity can be renewed for His people. As the road to unity with the Lord and—we should never forget that—also with the brother and sister, is the Lord's Supper, it seems to be clear that the Eucharist also must be evaluated as the road appointed by Christ for the promotion of the union of the churches. Most church leaders I meet in Ceylon tell me that first our churches should be united and then the Lord's Supper shall be enjoyed by all of us in unison. But that is as strange a saying as when I contend that I must be a saint before I am allowed to go to Holy Com-

munion. We know that it is just the other side around. Only when one realizes that one is not a saint, but a miserable sinner, then, and for that reason, one should go, surely as a repentant sinner, knowing that the atoning power must come from the Lord who died for such sinners as we are and also knowing that that atoning power is never to be found in us ourselves.

Therefore the most destructive element in the divided life of the churches is that churches dare to say to each other: 'My Communion service is for my own members only and not for yours.' Such a saying and such an action implies nothing less than an attempt to limit the range of the atoning and reconciling power of Jesus Christ; it is the presumptuous act of a church which draws man-made limits to the expansion of the new humanity through the power of the living Christ. Don't you agree with me that the most important thing is that we are constantly called to Christ who died for our reconciliation with Him, to that Saviour of ours, who is living now and is eager to give us the fruit of His reconciliatory work? Do you dare to say that it is more important that I enjoy the snug brotherhood of my separated church and foster my special beliefs? Do we pastors not rightly tell the flock that the communicants should come to the Holy Table, not cleaving to their sins any more but in true repentance and praying and longing for the new life in Christ. That same spirit of belief in the guidance of the Holy Spirit should be found in all Christians in that wider aspect of the renewal of the Church. We should be willing to gather again and again around the Table of the living Lord who will guide us forward to new ventures of faith. Church order and church creeds need in our days to be reinterpreted in a dynamic fashion with reference to the Mission of the Church. For we want the union which starts at the Holy Table not for itself, but in order to tell the world of that wonderful salvation we have found in our Lord. If it starts at the Communion Table and is done in union then it will

\*Reprinted by permission from "The Presbyterian", Ceylon.

not be done any more in that half-hearted way it is done now. Half-hearted I say, for we don't really believe in a living Lord, for if we did we should not dare any more to exclude the brother in Christ from the Table of the Lord, which is His Table, not ours.

Unless we dare this new venture—inter-communion between the churches which are heading toward union—the churches will merely carry on, anxious to stay in the rut of their complacent courses, sticking to their specific doctrines or their special orders, supposing, as they possess by their doctrines or their orders Christ automatically, that there is no need for them to press onward. Yet Paul warns us that we should forget the things which are behind and press forward to the goal of the high calling in Christ. It is my deep conviction that the movement toward church union in this country will only make real progress in so far as inter-communion is experienced between Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and all those who think that the words of the Lord 'that they

all may be one' should be taken seriously. If that inter-communion is given unequivocally and ungrudgingly, new forces will be released, that is to say, the Holy Spirit will have room to work. If not, maybe in a few years we shall come to some kind of an administrative union, but the local church member will remain rather suspicious for he has not heard the blowing of the wind of the Spirit. Let us realize that the Holy Spirit always asks people to break up their earthly tabernacles. The true worshippers will not think that they have to meet God the Father in Wolfendahl Church, Scots Kirk, Methodist Church Colpetty, Baptist Church, Cinnamon Gardens or in Christ Church, Galle Face. The true worshippers will worship the Father in the unity of the Spirit and in the truth of the living Lord.

INTER-COMMUNION NOW AND HERE IS THE WAY TO CHURCH UNION. NO BARRIERS ANYMORE BETWEEN THE FOLLOWERS OF THE ONE LORD !

## "There is One Body"

REV. DR EMLYN DAVIES, WINNIPEG\*

### Fellowship and Schism

THE acknowledgement of the Lordship of Christ implies and involves a life of fellowship. The *koinonia* of the Spirit is the unique characteristic of the Church, and we cannot conceive of the Church of Christ and be obedient to Her imperatives unless we, too, are in fellowship with Christ and with one another. Any Christian communion which claims to be a manifestation of the Church of Christ has no right to such a description of itself if it be deliberately and wilfully out of fellowship with any other.

A church out of fellowship is a church in schism. A church which makes exclusive claims about itself, its ministry, its doctrine, its tradition or its usages and denies fellowship to another is schismatic. This does not rule out the possibility or even the

requirement of much variety and diversity; but it does rule out lack of fellowship.

I stand within the Baptist tradition, a tradition, that was formally created and initiated ninety-four years after Luther nailed his theses to the door of the University Church of Wittenberg. It has had and honoured role to play in the history of the Church for over three hundred and fifty years. In its advocacy of freedom for Roman Catholics, Turks, Jews and, indeed, for all, the Baptist witness has rendered a signal service to the cause of Christ. But I have to confess that within the Baptist tradition there have been and there still are examples of the disruption and the breaking of fellowship among ourselves which are a scandal and a disgrace to the cause of Christ. I offer no excuses. I can only stand with my brethren and make confession with them of the sin of our disunity.

I have used my own tradition not to decry it, but to illustrate what I believe to be the

\*Retiring President's address (abbreviated) at twelfth meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches. Continued from August issue.

essential meaning of the "sin of schism." This sin is committed both within and between denominations. The essential character of the sinfulness is that in our pride—our ecclesiastical, our doctrinal and our traditional pride—we create a unity of our own and give it priority over the given unity of the Church, which is our oneness in Jesus Christ. We have set up our "basis of union" as the ultimate mark of the Church and those who do not accept this are not allowed to be in fellowship with us. But this is schism and schism is sin.

### Unfinished Reformation

It will be obvious, therefore, that there is an unfinished reformation to be undertaken within the life of the Church. There is an urgent and imperative need for renewal within the Church herself. This must take place on two levels at least, the theological and the practical. On the theological level there is still the need for constant and faithful conversation in the interests of theological truth. The need for theological enquiry is not determined by our desire to vindicate our own doctrine and practice. Our concerns with the truth of the gospel. What does the gospel declare to be the truth regarding the Church of Jesus Christ? All our pre-suppositions, our dogmas, our practices and our traditions have all to be constantly examined. They must always be submitted to the scrutiny of the gospel and this remains an unfinished work. Its undertaking is ever at the prompting of the Holy Spirit, and with all of us it is a case of "not having yet achieved," but a "pressing onward towards the mark of our high calling in Christ Jesus." To deny this is to deny the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit within the Church and to declare that the ministry of the Holy Ghost has been completed. We know full well that this will not be so until He has led us "into all truth."

On the practical level, it will involve a mutual recognition of ministries, and a recognition that will make it possible for men from one communion to exercise a true ministry within another. This is much more than the courteous permission to preach from the pulpit—although even that is a welcome recognition in our day. It is rather a full acknowledgement that the ministry which is exercised in the Church is Christ's ministry and that the preaching of

the Word and the administration of the sacraments are not to be used to underline our division, but as the appointed means whereby the unity of Christ is achieved within our historical situation and made manifest to the world.

The ministry, inter-communion, inter-confessional worship—these matters are no longer confined to the somewhat detached area of secluded theological debate. They have become issues of vital significance for Canada and, especially, for the Church in Canada. Can we seriously offer to Canada the gospel of Jesus Christ as her true salvation and continue in our ways? Is there any hope for the salvation of the city if the temple has ceased to be the temple? If the Church is not truly the Church of Jesus Christ, can she claim to possess that gift of God which is, also, the secret of those things which belong to the peace of the nation and of the world? We know the answer. A divided Church has nothing creative or redemptive to say to a broken and a divided world. Indeed, the only comment such a world feels like making to such a Church is "Physician, heal thyself." It is a just, though rather cutting comment.

What then shall we say to the Church in Canada, to all our fellow-Christians who pray for the true estate of the "holy, catholic Church"?

### Of what do we Repent ?

Our first summons must be to a full confession of our sin. There can be no renewal without penitence, and any Christian communion in Canada which neither recognizes nor admits its need for repentance has long since ceased to be a member of the "holy, catholic, apostolic Church."

This is much easier said than done. We protest that our present divisions are not sinful; unhappy perhaps, but not sinful. After all, we have come to these positions as a result of sincere, prayerful enquiry. We hold these convictions sincerely. This is how we have been led by the Holy Spirit—this is how we have learned Christ. We may have fallen short, indeed, we have. But we are where we are, and we hold what we hold, because of our fidelity to the gospel of the blessed God as we have received it, studied it and understood it. We do not, therefore, take kindly to the suggestion that

our first exercise as we are confronted with the disunity of the Church is one of penitence and of contrition of heart.

There is serious confusion here. *We are not being asked to confess our grievous sin because we are insincere.* The root cause of our disunity is not that some of us are sincere and others of us are not. We are not divided by sincerity on the one hand or by hypocrisy on the other. There are sincere members of every Christian communion and it must be obvious to everyone except to the deliberately and the wilfully blind that God has honoured the sincerity of those who have obeyed the guidance of the Spirit.

There is much more than sincerity involved here. Through scripture, the teaching of the Church, the testimony of the Apostles and the faith of the Saints, it has been made abundantly clear that there is only one Church because there is only one God, only one Body because there is only one Christ. All the combined evidence available to us makes this the basic truth of our understanding of the Church. This is one matter which is not open to question.

Yet, though we know this, we claim that our local manifestation or historical expression of the Church justifies our speaking of other communions as though they were faulty or inadequate or lacking in some order, or ministry, or doctrine which deprives them of their rightful place within the Church of Christ. What is more, we build around our claim a wall of prejudice which hardens into the most incredible stupidity. In other circles it would be described as imbecility. In our own language it is a form of blasphemy.

Consequently, what we offer is idolatry, and it is this which is the source of much of our confusion and of our sin. *We have set up false gods and we have bowed before them.* In the name of tradition, or of history, because of the accretions of the years or in order to maintain our territorial, political and financial advantage over others, we have created "gods" and have claimed for them the worship which can only rightly be offered to the true God. We claim divine sanction for what we have done, and this is our shame and the sorrow of Christ. Without knowing it we have made an idol of the Bible and set up the Book of the Lord above the Lord of the Book. We have, also, made an idol of the

Church and set up the Church of the Lord above the Lord of the Church. It is this which betrays our sinfulness. "The infallibility of the Pope," "the historic episcopate," "believers' baptism by immersion," "justification by faith," "the Bible says," "the priesthood of all believers"—what are these and many other phrases similar to them but the slogans of a party? We know that the gospel of redemption and of reconciliation was not the announcement of some new ideas concerning some ecclesiastical institution or custom or doctrine or usage. *We know that the gospel is the good news of God. Its author is God; its subject is God.* We are not being presented with an attractive theory regarding the kind of world this world of ours might become if certain principles were accepted and applied. We are being confronted with the living God, undertaking on behalf of this world that one mighty act whereby this world might know the secret of its own redemption and the mystery of the life everlasting. This mighty deed was revealed in the birth, life, death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and in this series of events the fulness and the mystery of God Himself stand unveiled.

### What we Proclaim

The high and holy task of proclaiming this gospel has been entrusted to the Church, and one of the marks of the true Church is that the message which is proclaimed is the gospel of God. In other words, no matter from where we may begin, every discussion of the differences between Christians leads to the truth of the gospel and to the doctrine of the Church.

It is completely unsatisfactory, even false, to assume that one visible, historical communion as has been known since the first days of the Christian Church can be identified as the "one, holy, catholic Church." It is unsatisfactory because the history of every communion exposes the unworthiness, the betrayal and the disunity which are the marks of a human society and have no claim to be accepted as the marks of the Church of Christ. It is false because the doctrine of the Holy Spirit makes it clear that the truth of the gospel, which includes the truth concerning the Church, has been entrusted to Him and to no other. Both on the grounds of history and in the light of theology, it is a truer reading of the historical situation to say

that in every organized Christian communion Christ has recognized some of "His own." He calls them by name and they know His voice. Indeed, there are some other sheep of His whose whereabouts we do not know. These, too, He will call and include within the "one flock, under the one Shepherd."

We are not theorizing or speculating. We are taking seriously the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We do not presume to suggest that His ministry of guidance and of illumination is limited to one group of men or even to one man, however venerably they may be esteemed, or however pious and unblemished they may be in their personal lives. We have no such authority to limit the Holy Spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth.....So is every one who is born of the Spirit." There is an unpredictable element about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and only the arrogant will seek to limit the truth of God to one historical pattern....

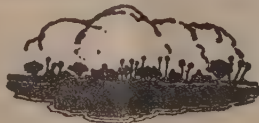
We have all been baptized into His death. By our baptism we were incorporated into His Body, which is the Church. That is the meaning of Christian Baptism. Through our baptism we have been raised into newness of life and we have been bidden to walk in the same. This is not primarily a life in accordance with a different moral code. It is God's life, the life He makes available to us through the means of grace which He provides within the Church, the "holy Society" which is the true home of those who have confessed Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and live at peace and in fellowship with all those who have made a similar confession. There can, therefore, be no spiritual *apartheid* within the fellowship of Christ. We are one in Christ—neither bond nor free, Jew or Gentile, black or white, Protestant or Catholic (of any variety). Our oneness derives from Him. It has nothing to do with our acceptance of any doctrine or theory regarding the papacy or the episcopate, regarding baptism or what happens at the mass or the eucharist or the Communion Table. All these are subsidiary issues. We are one in Christ, and because we are one in Him we are, also, free in Him.

### Christian Freedom

Our only freedom, as Christians, is our freedom in Christ. We are not free to do as we like. We are not free to hive off on our own and get into some kind of ecclesiastical huddle. We are not free to unchurch anyone or to deny to them the name of Christian. We are the slaves of Christ and yet we are free. This is the paradox of our Christian life, the "I—yet not I" of Christian experience.

We are not pleading for the reunion of the churches or for the reunion of Christendom. We are pleading with Christians wherever they are to "walk in newness of life." We are pleading with Christians not to deny the fellowship, the "*koinonia* of the Spirit." We are pleading with Christians not to use the "Table of the Lord" as a source of dissension and division. We are pleading with Christians to show forth the glory of Christ. We seek not as Christians social prestige or political power for our own Christian group. To do so is to exploit the Church of Christ for unworthy ends. Any Church that does this sooner or later comes under judgment and is cast away. This is the story of the "people of God" writ large over the history of the Jew and the Christian. There are times when I think that the supine, ineffectiveness of our Christian testimony in our day is the judgment of God upon a people who have sold their inheritance for a bowl of soup, served in a golden bowl with pomp and ceremonial splendour. It may even be that we have exchanged the inheritance of our fathers for a vegetable garden, that we might live on the fat of the land while millions go hungry and curse the name of our God.

It may well be that the call of repentance has come too late. We do not know. We only know that whatever step we take it will be but a small and feeble step compared to that which God in His infinite mercy took from the throne of His glory and entered into a working-class home to pitch His Tent among us that we might behold His glory. "My brethren, ye behold your calling. Walk worthy of your vocation, in meekness and in lowliness of Spirit."



# News Reports

## Study Conference at Nasrapur

September 8-12, 1959

**A**T the Bombay Diocesan Study Conference of the CIBPC held in September 1958 the proposal was made to hold an Inter church Study Conference on Church Union, and, on the invitation of the Bishop of Bombay, a small committee representing various churches met in Bombay on 16 March, 1959, to plan for such a conference.

The Study Conference duly met at the Spiritual Life Centre, Nasrapur, from 8-12 September, 1959. On the three successive mornings of the Conference the Holy Communion was celebrated according to the Use of the Church of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon, the United Church of Northern India, and the Methodist Church in Southern Asia. The pain of being unable to meet together freely at the Lord's Table came as a great shock to some who had not yet realised the seriousness of our divisions, and as a renewed sorrow even to those who had. But in the morning and evening devotions led by the Ven. S. A. Mara, in the midday intercessions, and in the three main lectures given by the Rev. D. H. S. Lyon of Nagpur, we were given signs of a deep underlying unity also. In the afternoon sessions the Rev. E. C. Reddy of Belgaum ably expounded the main features of the Plan of Union for North India and Pakistan, and in the discussion further light was thrown on the meaning of the Plan; and even where agreement was not reached, there was a real demonstration of the fruitfulness of inter-church conversation which is prepared to follow the apostolic precept about speaking the truth in love.

Mr Lyon's talks dealt with the One Church—Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, each of these three adjectives being examined on successive mornings. To aid comprehension, typewritten outlines of the talks were made available; and to promote further study full texts of the talks were later distributed to all members of the Conference. Many of our agreements and disagreements turned on the meaning of the word "Apostolic"!

On three evenings of the Conference informative addresses were given by various

ministers and laymen on 'Our present field of work'; and this enabled us to get a comprehensive picture of existing Christian work in Bombay State.

The Conference was not a legislative body—decisive action in the matter of Church Union is for the Churches themselves. But it was generally agreed that such a coming together was valuable, that it might well be repeated next year (1960); and that its work might well be supplemented by smaller regional gatherings, making use of existing church and inter-church organisations where possible. For these purposes the Conference decided to maintain the planning committee in existence, with power to co-opt additional members.

The following churches were represented at the Conference:

CIBPC (Anglican) 27

Methodist Church of S. Asia 18

UCNI (Presbyterian-Congregationalist) 15

Church of the Brethren 2

In addition 3 observers were present from the Australian Churches of Christ Mission, one from the Salvation Army, and one from the Wesleyan Methodist Mission of Gujarat.

A number of apologies for absence, expressions of interest, and indications that this subject is arousing interest in our Bombay State were received by the Committee during and after the Study Conference.

Our thanks are due to the Rev. and Mrs. John Crozier and the staff of the Spiritual Life Centre, Nasrapur, to our speakers and to our Chairman, the Bishop of Bombay. We hope that all who read this brief report will continue to play their part in the movement for the recovery of the Church's Unity especially in Western India.

D. M. Kennedy, Chairman,  
Rose Gurupatham, Secretary,  
Planning Committee.

## Economic Assets and Safeguarding of Trusts

Findings of Meeting of Special Committee held at Nagpur, August 4, & 5, 1959

Considerable thought and discussion was given to the importance of understanding the

implications in the transfer of property by the negotiating churches to the proposed Church of North India. Detailed suggestions are given herewith in order that the transfer of property, in no way, become a deterrent to Church Union, nor a major argument in favour of Church Union.

It should be considered as a transfer of responsibility so that the new Church shall assume a greater degree of stewardship for God's gifts of property and wealth, in addition to its essential stewardship of God's grace.

### Overseas Missions and Churches

We endorse the following recommendations of the former Sub-Committee :—

6. (a) Overseas property-holding bodies should take care to see that their own constitutions give them the power to transfer, i. e.,
  - (i) to transfer at all,
  - (ii) to transfer to holding bodies registered in foreign countries,
  - (iii) to transfer in India to the particular body envisaged.

(b) Each Mission should take steps now to see that it is legally competent to make a transfer of the kind contemplated namely,

- (i) a transfer to some Indian body of similar character, and
- (ii) a transfer to some Indian body representing a United Church.

If it finds that it is not so competent as is likely in the case of (ii) then it should arrange for itself to be made so, and this step should be taken in its home country.

Overseas missions should make sure their constitutions empower them to transfer wholesale their property in India to a Trust Association or an Indian body of similar character.

Overseas missions should transfer

- (a) All immoveable property such as
  - (i) churches and parsonages
  - (ii) institutions and property connected with them.
- (iii) residences and other properties.

(b) All moveable property which is held in India, including endowments, securities, investments, shares, etc.

(c) The missionary societies and church bodies abroad be asked to consider the advisability of transferring to India, to be held

in India, endowments which are invested overseas for the benefit of the Church in India.

### 2. Regional or Denominational Trust Associations

Reasons for transfer of property to denominational Trust Associations in India before Union :

- (a) To give greater security of ownership of property for political reasons, both external and internal.
- (b) To avoid the difficulties that may arise within the Church.
- (c) To simplify the transfer of endowments to the proposed United Church.

3. We recommend that the overseas missions take advantage of the present facilities (reduction in transfer cost) for transfer of property to Indian bodies.

4. Where the overseas bodies are empowered under their constitutions to transfer their properties they should pass a resolution authorizing their attorney in India to effect the transfer on their behalf.

5. (a) We advise the negotiating churches the early formation of legally incorporated bodies in India, either to a regional or denominational trust, under the Companies Act of 1956, or the Societies Registration Act of 1860.

(b) Steps which the negotiating churches should take in preparation for the setting up of Denominational/Regional Trust Associations—

- i. Each church should make a complete and detailed schedule of all properties held by it, as per attached form.
- ii. Prepare Transfer Deeds in consultation with a lawyer (suggested deed attached).

N. B. The property may be transferred for a nominal fee under Art. 62E of the Indian Stamp Act. State Governments have made a special reduction of 75% on the Stamp Duty.

### 6. Church of North India Trust Association

In the meantime the Negotiating Committee should take steps to form a Church of North India Trust Association in order that it may be quickly registered.

Regional/Denominational Trusts of the uniting churches will then transfer their properties to the CNITA.

7. (a) The CNITA shall have its headquarters at the same place as the headquarters of the Church of North India.

(b) In order to assure the effective working of the Trust Association it should have full-time paid officers such as—

- i. Secretary of the Trust Association
- ii. Legal adviser
- iii. Custodian of Documents
- iv. Trained Accountant.

(c) The CNITA shall be managed by the Trustees elected by the Synod of the Church of North India, care being taken that all dioceses are represented, at least by rotation.

- i. The CNITA shall delegate power to the diocese and shall manage the diocesan properties through a 'property committee' which shall be responsible to the diocese. The CNITA shall reserve to itself the right to take direct action in respect of any property in a diocese.
- ii. The Diocese shall ultimately be responsible to CNITA in regard to the management of the said properties.
- iii. Each diocese shall be assessed for the administrative expenses necessary for the running of the Trust Office.

E. C. Bhatt  
Chairman.

A. B. Shinde  
Recording Secretary.

### The Negotiating Committee

As we go to press, the date of the next meeting of the Negotiating Committee is under discussion among the delegations. It had been proposed for early December 1959, and it may still be held at that time. If so, it may be able to make proposals which would affect the decisions still to be taken by such bodies as the CIPBC and the MCSA.

On the other hand, it has been observed that the Committee would be in a much better position to consider the next steps if it could meet *after* the various bodies have clearly stated their attitude to the Plan of Union as it has actually been submitted to them. Some of them have already voted, on that Plan and there would seem to be definite advantage in having the opinion of all on the same proposal. For this reason, it may be that the meeting of the Committee will be postponed for about six months.

If this should be done, it is hoped that the churches would take the opportunity to say clearly whether or not they would find it possible to unite on the basis now before them, leaving any adjustments in detail to the Inaugural Committee. If the answer is positive, then the next steps will be comparatively simple. If the answer of one or more should be negative then a clear statement of the reasons for this would make it possible for the Committee to decide whether or not negotiations should be re-opened.

### MCSA may postpone decision

The Convener of the Delegation of the Methodist Church in Southern Asia reports that the Executive Board of that Church has decided not to refer the question of Union to the annual Conferences for their vote. It is understood that this action would imply that the question is shelved for four years. It is not clearly known whether or not this decision is final but if it is, it will inevitably mean that the Negotiating Committee will not know the mind of one of the largest of the churches concerned for a much longer period than was contemplated at the Pachmarhi meeting.

Bishop Subhan of the Methodist Church has authorised the Convener to deny a rumour that his own attitude to the cause of Union has been altered.



# Book Reviews

**The Meaning and Practice of Prayer.** Carol Graham. Published for The Christian Students' Library by the Christian Literature Society, pp 94. Rs. 1.50.

'Lord teach us to pray' was the cry of the the disciples to our Lord, and has been the cry of His followers ever since.

'In the beginning God' and from there the writer leads on to 'for God is love, and prayer is the expression of the love which lies between us and Him.' In all the pages of this book we are helped to know God. It sends the reader to the Bible, for in every chapter there are references first from the Old Testament and then on to the fuller revelation in the New Testament. The reader, or the student, for this is a book to study, is led step by step through Worship, and Penitence, to Meditation upon God. Then, turning away from his own relationship to God to the needs of others he is shown the place of Petition and Intercession in the prayer life. Through it all he is led to think of our Lord's own life of prayer, and His teaching about prayer.

The chapter on 'Recollection' will open up new possibilities of prayer for many a busy pastor or layman. So often prayer of this kind is thought of as the privilege of a few rare souls who have 'time to pray'. Carol Graham shows in this chapter how the ordinary man and woman may live and walk with God in the daily round of life. Those busy people who say they have no time to pray will be helped to see, how the practice of the presence of God is possible in the busiest life, and that even the frustration of waiting for a bus can be turned into an opportunity for prayer.

Finally there is a chapter on Corporate Prayer and our need as Christians to pray together. For each 'step', prayer patterns are given, and here it might have been more helpful if fuller explanation on how to use these had been given, for it is an untried way for many.

The book is easily read, and its language clear and simple. It is to be hoped it will speedily be translated into the languages of India. It is not a text book, as is expected

of a book in The Christian Students' Library' But it sends the reader to the Bible, the fundamental text book for us all. Read slowly and devotionally it will open many new experiences of the richness of prayer. For us all, ordinary church members as well as pastors and theological students there is much of value and strength in this book.

"Teach us to pray", and here is a book to help us to pray. The Church in India will be deeply grateful to Sister Carol Graham for this gift.

W.S.S.

We gladly extend a welcome to the 3rd revised edition of **The People of the Mosque** (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta 16; Rs. 9.75), by the well known Baptist scholar, L. Bevan Jones.

The book opens—after a dedication to an Anglican canon!—with a section on the rise and expansion of Islam; and then, in three main sections, the four foundations of Islam, its faith and practice and its position in the modern world are reviewed in an interesting and informative way. In the section on Islamic faith and practice, there are specially valuable chapters on Sufism and the mystic path; and in these the author acknowledges his indebtedness to the help of Bishop John Subhan. The section on Islam in the modern world includes chapters on Islam in India and on Islamic reform movements; and the book closes with a full and thoughtful discussion on Christianity and Islam. Especially attractive is the statement (pp. 247 ff.) on "The need of sympathetic study". The author's standpoint is well summarised by his quotation from the late Dr. Farquhar. "The more fully the question of the relative value of Christianity and the faiths of India comes into public discussion, the more need there is for a quiet, reasonable manner, and a will to see the best as well as the worst in the teaching and the traditional usages of the religions; harshness and condemnation can only repel." Readers of this journal may well feel that this admirably indicates the temper needed not only in inter-religious discussion, but in inter-church discussion as well!

Those who have long known this fine book will be glad to hear that it is in print again; and others will be glad to be introduced to it for the first time, in its new edition.

Donald Kennedy  
(Bombay)

**The First Decade:** *An account of the Church of South India; by Rajaiah D. Paul.* (Christian Literature Society, Madras, Rs. 6.50)

In this close packed volume of close on three hundred pages we have a vivid picture of the manifold life and work of the Church of South India by one who, as Secretary of its Synod for some years, was admirably situated to compose such a book.

A reader in North India, where we still strive, over a geographical area so vastly greater, to enter on the union for which we long, can be pardoned if it is with a little envy that he learns about all that is going on in the South. There, in the notable work that has been done in the development of worship, in the progress in evangelism, in facing the problems of the rural ministry, in real theological thinking, we see not only the benefits of belonging to a Christian community in an area where it is comparatively strong but above all the tremendous release of power which comes with the very fact of Union. Whatever disappointment about certain aspects of the Church's life may be voiced from time to time, one never hears from South India of any who would for a moment want to go back to the old unhappy days of divided denominations in which we in the North still live. In South India there is an example to give us boldness.

Even so, in these frank pages there is much to remind us that the Church in the South is not spared the difficulties and problems with which others are all too familiar. Church Mission Integration has not proceeded as far as we might have expected; the problems of Christian education, where just about half of the baptized children attend Sunday School, are rendered all the more acute as primary education passes out of the Christian hands; dependence on foreign help is still deplored, and while the CSI has from the beginning placed evangelism in the forefront of its task, it seems all too evident that many have yet to be awakened to the fact that it is the Church itself, including all its members, which is the evangelist. Awareness of such problems, however, does not mean that there is room for complacency anywhere else. What it may mean is that our churches in the North and in the South have more to learn together and from each other than we have realised.

It is somewhat disappointing that the author shows so little awareness of what is going on in the North. It might, for instance, have been of interest if in his remarks about the diaconate he had noted how the North India Plan has deliberately sought to provide for a pattern of this ministry very much in line with what the CSI is striving after. Also it is unfortunate that on p. 186 the author should make the completely erroneous statement that the North India Plan has "slavishly copied" the CSI section on the laity. Actually in this section the North India Plan represents a considerable advance in thinking about the ministry of the total membership of the Church.

Despite these brief criticisms, this is a book to be heartily recommended for study.

W. S.



# A Word from Australia

We acknowledge our failure as churches to bear witness to the Church's Faith in its fulness.

"We none of us come into union expressing the Church's Faith in its fulness, but confessing to God and one another the partial character of our vision, the confusion of our teaching, the poverty of our worship, and the weakness of our fellowship. If we cannot come confessing our sins, we had better not come at all. There is a given Faith, but we do not yet know it in its fulness; we have not spoken of it as we ought.

Our defection can be described in more ways than one.

We are weak in the Faith because we are divided. We have spoken of the Faith and our adherence to it in a self-justifying way, defining our position as against that of other Christians. We have been effectively polemical and self-satisfyingly Pharisaic. We have won the argument, but lost the mystery of the Faith. Even when, as is sometimes the case, churches divided one from another do in fact preserve different aspects of the Faith for the enrichment of the whole Body, those very truths become distorted when affirmed out of relation to the Faith as a whole. The ravages of sin on account of our divisions have gone so deep that we frequently do not recognise that we are sinning.

It is also true that we are divided because we are weak. The partial character of our grasp upon the Faith is due to common sins such as indolence. Our ministers know what they like to preach, and the people know what they like to hear. To acknowledge that we often do not know what God the Lord would have us say would involve the ministry in a strenuous and disciplined struggle with God's Holy Word. To receive the unexpected Word would upset our congregations in the even tenor of their ways. It is easy to go on in our several denominations, improving the machinery, but never asking or allowing ourselves to be asked the disturbing question.

And so the catalogue of sins could be increased; and we shall need to speak of them to God and man until we all cry: Lord, have mercy; Lord, forgive."

(From *The Faith of the Church*, a recent statement of the Joint Congregational—Methodist—Presbyterian Commission on Church Union in Australia, pp. 29—30. Obtainable from the Joint Board of Graded Lessons, 147 Collins Street, Melbourne, price two shillings and six pence.)

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## The Lord's Table

".....The scandal continues of Christians who will eat and drink their ordinary meals together, but refuse to do so when it is Christ who invites them: 'Yes, Lord', they say, 'I am willing to sup with Thee, but not with this person or that person! I am willing, but on condition that we do not sit at the same table, and that Thou shouldst only sup with me and with those who have the same theory as I have as to the manner in which Thou art present with us.' In our Lord's lifetime the Pharisees and the orthodox wished to monopolize Jesus, murmuring when they saw him eating with publicans and sinners. 'With us, Lord, yes; but not with those people who compromise Thee, and who do not know the favour Thou bestowest on them'. Are we then to refuse to take part in the great banquet of God's Kingdom, because we shall not be associating there only with people from our own church or party? Are we to reproach Jesus because his love is too wide and inclusive, because he promises a place at that eternal feast to the Roman centurion, a pagan though a man of faith, and to many more who will come from all the corners of the earth to sit at the table in the Kingdom of Heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob? Shall we consent to share in that feast in such mixed company?"

Our exclusiveness only succeeds in isolating us. A certain Anglican bishop was right when he said: "Jesus assured us that He was present in the Holy Communion, but He did not choose to tell us how. Why should we wish to know more than He has told us?"

J. D. Benoit: *Liturgical Renewal* (SCM, London)

## The Unity of the Church

When an American travels abroad, he is often asked what his nationality is. Unless he is hopelessly provincial, he would not answer, 'I am a Missourian', or 'I am a North Dakotan'. He would reply, 'I am an American'. His identity as a member of the whole nation is more important than his specific location within the nation or the peculiar characteristics of the locality where he lives.

It is equally strange when one is asked what his religious faith is for him to answer 'I am a Presbyterian', or 'I am a Methodist'. The correct answer would be, 'I am Christian'. One often hears someone describing another by saying, 'He is of the Baptist faith', or, 'He was reared in the Lutheran faith'. Such statements are basically incorrect. There is no Baptist faith, or Lutheran faith, or Presbyterian faith, or Episcopal faith. There is only the Christian faith. True faith in Christ is exactly the same thing whether the one who has it be a Quaker, a Congregationalist, a Presbyterian, or an Anglo-Catholic. Our relation to Christ is quite above the particular denomination to which we belong.

From : Donald G. Miller : *The People of God*. SCM

### Writers in this number :

The Venerable Archdeacon Sully is leader of the delegation of the CIPBC on the Negotiating Committee and is also Secretary of that Committee.

The Rev. Th. B. W. Gramberg, minister of the Scots Kirk, Kandy, is Editor of "The Presbyterian", organ of the Presbytery of Lanka.

Dr Emlyn Davies of the Canadian Baptist Churches, was President of the Canadian Council of Churches in 1958.

The Rev. Donald Kennedy, a missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church and a minister of the UCNI, is on the staff of Wilson College, Bombay.